

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM APPROVAL REVIEW**

**COE-BROWN NORTHWOOD ACADEMY
FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

David Smith, Headmaster
Mary Susan Wilcox-Smith, Director Of Special Education

Visit Conducted on February 27th and 28th, 2002
Report Date August 2, 2002

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I. TEAM MEMBERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Professional Role</u>
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Visiting Team Members:

Dr. P. Alan Pardy, Chairperson, SERESC
Terry Brune, Educational Consultant, NH Dept. of Education
Beth Falzone, Assistant Administrator, Spaulding Youth Center
Kevin Murphy, Special Education Director, Somersworth/Rollinsford School District
James Stapleton, Special Educator/Case Manager, Winnisquam Regional School District
Lori DeTrude, Director of Special Education, Laconia School District

Building Level Team Members:

Mary Susan Wilcox-Smith, Director Of Special Education
David Smith, Headmaster
Kathi Sokness, Skills Teacher
Brent Tkaczyk, Skills Teacher
Timothy E. Cox, Skills Teacher
Jennifer Squier, English Teacher
Sarah Ward, Natural Resources Teacher
Heidi Cleveland, Math Teacher
Peter Stivali, Social Studies Teacher

II. INTRODUCTION

Coe-Brown Northwood Academy (CBNA) is a “public academy”, one of only two in New Hampshire (the other being Pinkerton Academy in Derry). Coe-Brown Northwood Academy, operating with a Board of Trustees, has contractual arrangements with the towns of Northwood and Strafford, who do not have their own high school. Other towns, including Deerfield, Nottingham, Barnstead and Pittsfield, send a small number of tuition students to CBNA. The total enrollment of Coe-Brown was approximately 650 students at the time of this visit. Their identified students numbered 83, served in a resource room program with substantial inclusion in regular education classrooms. Services are provided to students with disabilities in the areas of Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disability, Other Health Impaired, and Speech and Language. The age range is 14-21, grades 9 through 12.

The special education department at Coe-Brown consists of 5 full-time certified staff, including 3 full-time teachers, one teacher/coordinator, and a speech-language pathologist. There are several para-professionals, some providing one-on-one support for individual students, and a full-time tutor who is funded through the IDEA grant of SAU 44. All staff are appropriately certified. The Director of Special Education at CBNA reports directly to the Headmaster, who reports to the Board of Trustees.

III. PURPOSE OF VISIT

The New Hampshire Department of Education conducted a Special Education Program Approval Review at Coe-Brown Northwood Academy on February 27 and 28, 2002 for the purpose of reviewing the present status of programs and services made available to the children and youth who are enrolled in the education programs. As part of the Program Approval Visit, all of the classrooms/educational programs at CBNA were reviewed.

Activities related to this Program Approval Visit included the review of all application materials submitted by Coe-Brown Northwood Academy, verification of personnel credentials for special education staff, program description reviews with staff, administration and students, and classroom observations. Throughout the entire review process, the visiting team worked in collaboration with the staff at CBNA and their professionalism, active involvement and cooperation were greatly appreciated and recognized.

IV. PROGRAM APPROVAL REVIEW PROCESS

The New Hampshire Department of Education provided Coe-Brown Northwood Academy with a visiting team of professional educators to work collaboratively with the staff in conducting the data collection and special education program approval activities. The two-day visit was designed as a focused review on the following areas of programming:

- Access to the General Curriculum
- Transition
- Assessment

As part of this Program Approval Visit, six students were interviewed, as were their parents, and all six were observed in a classroom setting. The Director of Education for CBNA was interviewed, along with the Director of Education for SAU 44. There was an exit meeting at the end of the second day, with the Headmaster present, along with special and regular education staff.

There are no James O files or Out of District files to be reviewed at Coe-Brown Northwood Academy.

V. STATUS OF CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS PROGRAM APPROVAL VISIT

The last Program Approval Visit was conducted during the 1996-1997 school year with the previous Special Education Director and a team consisting of 10 internal members and four external members. A full report of this committee's work was presented to the Board of Trustees on May 14, 1997. A list of four compliance issues was signed as "completed" by Harvey Harkness, SERESC consultant, on January 13, 1998.

The present Special Education had seen neither the full committee's report nor the list of four compliance areas prior to the arrival of the team on February 27, 2002. Therefore, it is difficult to hold the present director responsible for any of the six areas identified in the action plan. Nonetheless, at least one of those goals, (#5, "Increasing the number of special education students into the mainstream of regular education...") may have been substantially accomplished. There is no base-line data from 1997, so it may be impossible to determine if that goal has been met.

In addition, Coe-Brown was one of the "pilot" sites for the "year-long" process, then known as "SPEDMIP", resulting in a non-traditional approach to the typical "goals and recommendations" of the usual 2-day site visits conducted in past years.

Issues of Significance:

Utilizing the newly-developed process of gathering data in three areas (Access to the General Curriculum, Transition and Assessment), the team came to the following general conclusions:

1. The students whose programs were reviewed appeared to be substantially integrated into the general curriculum, with minimal time spent in resource room settings;
2. The regular education teachers interviewed and observed appeared to be well aware of, and conversant with, individual student needs;
3. Special education staff are providing support and tutorial services, along with replacement ("Skills") classes in Math and English for selected students with IEPs. Staff stated that non-identified students may enroll in the "Skills" courses, although none were enrolled at the time of this visit. An additional course called Vocational Preparation is offered, also open to non-identified students. At the time of this visit, one non-identified student was enrolled in Voc. Prep.
4. The drop-out rate for students with IEPs is relatively low – data provided by CBNA indicated the following data on students with IEPs who dropped out:
 - 3/52 in 1997-98
 - 5/56 in 1998-99
 - 1/86 in 1999-2000
 - 4/83 in 2000-2001
5. Students with IEPs appear to be achieving at an "average" level of grades, as reported by CBNA, with the following data provided. For the first quarter of 2001-02:
 - The freshman average was 80.3 (a C)
 - The sophomore average was 83.6 (a C)
 - The junior average was 88.6 (a B)
 - The senior average was 84.3 (a C)
6. Communication systems in place appear to keep parents informed of their child's progress, and all six parents interviewed were pleased with their child's program and with the communication from CBNA;
7. Students with IEPs are earning the same credits for their Resource Room courses (Math and English Skills and Vocational Preparation) as are their non-disabled peers, and there is only one diploma issued at CBNA, to which all students appear to have access.
8. Curriculum is being reviewed and revised, based on scores from the California Achievement Test (CAT) which is given to all 9th and 11th graders, and from the NHEIAP results from 10th grade. Math and English curriculum is being revised based on these assessment results, and Science is next to be considered. Special education staff indicated that the content of the courses they teach is based on the general education Math and English curriculum.

VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Areas in the New Hampshire Standards for the Education of Students with Disabilities which were found to be problematic, based on the data gathered from this site visit:

IEPs (Ed 1109.05, CFR 300.342)

Present levels of Performance were not consistently clear in those IEPs reviewed; they were not stated in objective terms and they did not tie in directly with goals and objectives;

The format for the IEPs seemed somewhat fragmented, and there were omissions of certain required elements (e.g., number of hours a student was to be in regular vs. special education, and whether the student needed any accommodations on the NH state-wide testing)

Transition (Ed 1102.53, CFR 300.29)

There was no evidence of the four areas of transition (instruction, community, life skills and employment), in written form in any of the files reviewed, although two of the six students were under 16. There was reference to a “transition file”, but those files had paperwork that was not filled out.

Assessment (Ed 1133.05, CFR 300.128, 300.347 (a) 5, RSA 193-C)

There was no reference to NH state-wide testing in student files nor on their IEPs, and one parent was not aware of the possibility of her son having accommodations on the NHEIAP if it were needed.

Procedural Safeguards (Ed 1125.04 (c))

Letters that are sent to parents, inviting them to meetings, should be reviewed in terms of compliance with Ed 1125.04 (c), to assure that all due process safeguards are in place (See Recommendations, below).

Commendations:

1. Coe-Brown is to be commended for the extent of “mainstream” education that students with disabilities are receiving. It appears that pulling students out of regular education settings is kept to a minimum, based on individual need;
2. Communication between regular and special education staff appeared to be effective and well-established, with efficient means of keeping everyone informed of student progress (the “Unsatisfactory Work Notice” completed by teachers keeps special ed staff aware of missing assignments, quizzes, tests or projects);
3. Parents interviewed were all pleased with their child’s program and progress, and felt that communication was very good;
4. All staff (regular and special education) appeared to be responsive to students’ needs, and appeared to genuinely like the students they worked with;
5. Rapport between special and regular education staff appeared positive, and team-teaching opportunities are utilized;
6. Staff are well-qualified and well-informed;
7. Curriculum review and improvement appears to be a priority (a new approach to reading is being explored by the special education staff);
8. Coe-Brown offers a clean, quiet, orderly environment for learning;
9. All students with disabilities are earning regular credits toward a regular diploma;
10. The drop-out rate for students with disabilities is low;
11. There appears to be a strong and positive working relationship between Coe-Brown and the Special Education Director of SAU 44;
12. Expectations for students are high, consistent, and clearly communicated to individuals.

Recommendations:

1. IEPs need to be reviewed for format and content, relative to Ed 1109.05;
2. Special education staff may want to contact the NHDOE (Jackie Teague) for technical assistance regarding writing IEPs, using Present Levels of Performance to write objectives;
3. Transition activities need to be documented more completely, and staff may want to look at the recommended transition form developed by the NHDOE;
4. Notices to parents should be reviewed for compliance with Ed, 1125.04, to assure that all procedural safeguards are being afforded parents re: invitations to meetings, review of evaluation data, and placement decisions;
5. Coe-Brown staff (regular and special education) should continue to review the courses offered through the Skills program, to make sure that the content is consistent with, and part of, the general education curriculum;
6. Due to the low incidence of students with emotional disabilities (2 out of 157 in the Northwood SPEDIS print-out, both at the high school level), Coe-Brown should review those students with secondary emotional disabilities to determine if they are receiving the appropriate services;
7. In order to implement the above recommendations, it is suggested that the special education department at Coe-Brown have an increased clerical capacity, above the present part-time position.

VII. BUILDING LEVEL SUMMARY REPORTS

USING COMPLIANCE DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

BUILDING LEVEL COMPLIANCE DATA SUMMARY

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Private Facility: Coe-Brown Northwood Academy

Recorder/Summarizer: Alan Pardy

Date: February 28, 2002

Based on data collected from the Data Collection Forms, Interview Forms, Classroom Observations, etc. the following summary is intended to provide a “snapshot” of the quality of services and programs in the school/private facility in the areas of: **Access to the General Curriculum, Transition and Assessment.**

Access to the General Curriculum Ed. 1109.05, Implementation of IEP CFR 300.342Ed. 1115.07, Provision of Non-Academic Services CFR 300.306Ed. 1119.03, Full Access to District's Curricula CFR 300.26 CFR 300.347(a) Ed. 1119.08, Equal Education Opportunity CFR 300.304		Summary of Evidence <u>Coe-Brown Northwood Academy</u>
Indicator Level and Description		
	0 Student does not have access to the general curriculum.	
	1 Student has access to the general curriculum	
	2 Student participates in the general curriculum in the regular classroom	
	3a Student participates and progresses in the general curriculum with non-disabled peers for majority of the day with necessary support(s)	
X	3b <i>For Private Schools:</i> Student has opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers on a regular basis	Students were in regular classrooms for majority of their day, with non-disabled peers.
X	3c Student has the opportunity to participate in general extracurricular activities with necessary support(s) and is encouraged to do so.	Students with disabilities participate in extra-curricular activities and are encouraged to do so.
X	3d <i>For High School Students:</i> Student has the opportunity to earn regular credits leading to a regular diploma	Yes, all students earn the same credits leading to regular high school diploma.
X	4 Student engages in the general curriculum with necessary support(s) and participates in extracurricular activities in the Least Restrictive Environment	Yes. Case managers/resource teachers encourage and support students with disabilities to participate in general curriculum as well as in extra-curricular activities.

Transition Ed. 1102.53, Transition Planning CFR 300.29 Ed. 1107.02, Process; Provision of FAPE CFR 300.347 (b) (1) Ed. 1109.01, Transition Services CFR 300.132 This includes movement from (a) ESS to preschool, b) pre-school to elementary school, (c) age 14 or younger, or (d) age 16 or older		Summary of Evidence <u>Coe-Brown Northwood Academy</u>
Indicator Level and Description		
	0 No evidence of transition planning	
	1 Transition occurs, with little or no written documentation	
	2 Written documentation exists for transition services	Transition documentation exists, but was inconsistent.
	3a Team includes parents and personnel from other agencies in transition planning	Some documentation of participation from outside agencies. Parents are involved in transition planning, per file review.
	3b Student is informed before age 17 of his/her rights under IDEA	Yes, as documented in IEP meeting minutes.
	3c Plan addresses instruction, community, employment and daily life skills in a complete and comprehensive manner	Transition forms in separate files were blank.
	4a District has implemented a process to evaluate the success of the student's transition	
	4b Team, including student as appropriate, regularly assesses success of transition plan	

Assessment		Summary of Evidence
<u>Ed. 1133.05 (I), Program Requirements</u> <u>CFR 300.138</u> <u>CFR 300.347 (a) 5, RSA 193-C</u> This is not limited to NH statewide testing [NHEIAP]. It should also include districtwide and school assessments administered to non-disabled peers.		<u>Coe-Brown Northwood Academy</u>
	Indicator Level and Description	
	0 No evidence of student participation in district or state assessments	
	1a Student participates in district-wide and school assessments	Students with disabilities participate in school-wide assessments used for refining curriculum.
	1b Student participates in state assessment	Students with disabilities participate in NHEIAP, with modifications as needed.
	2 Alternate assessment provided as needed for both district and state assessments	NA at this time. No students currently at Coe-Brown need the NHEIAP-ALT
	3a Assessment data is used to develop IEP	No clear evidence of this.
	3b Multiple measures used for assessments (e.g. report cards, student work, teacher observations and portfolios)	Multiple documents in files to assess student work
	4 School uses assessment data to improve student learning (state, district-wide or school assessments)	Coe-Brown is using assessment data on all students to improve instruction for all students.

<u>Coe-Brown Northwood Academy</u>	
Strengths	Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good rapport between staff and parents, and staff and students. 2. Clear reporting system (quarterly reports with teacher initials, and the “Unsatisfactory Work Notice” to alert special ed dept. of incomplete/missing work) and clear expectations 3. Good access to general curriculum for identified students, and one diploma for all 4. Communication system within the school is thorough, and they are using a variety of assessment data to drive instruction, including the CAT scores (at 9th and 11th grades), the NHEIAP scores, and other assessments. 5. The Senior Portfolio, required for graduation, is commendable. 6. Parents interviewed were pleased with programs, services, communication & progress of their children. 7. All staff interviewed were responsive to student needs, and the availability of special and regular education teachers after school is commendable. 8. Team-teaching occurs between special and regular education staffs. 9. Class sizes are small – many under 20, most in low 20’s 10. Staff are well-qualified, well-versed in their field, and they like their students. 11. The environment was orderly, clean and respectful of everyone. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IEPs need to be reviewed in relation to Ed 1109.05, especially re: Present Levels of Performance. Goals and objectives seem to stand alone; the format of IEPs may need re-working 2. NHEIAP accommodations need to be explained to all parents, as part of the procedural safeguards (see # 3, below) 3. Procedural safeguards should be reviewed to assure compliance with Ed 1125.04 4. Transition plans should be reviewed, to make sure that the four areas required under Ed 1102.53 are consistently included and addressed in writing; 5. Evaluation summaries of initial or three-year re-evaluations need parent signatures 6. SPEDIS information may not be accurate for some students – this should be reviewed with the staff of SAU 44, who enter and maintain the SPEDIS data 7. Clerical help in the special education office should be increased from the part-time person now available, particularly if the special education department is to address the items listed above.